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ABSTRACT

In response to recent criticism of education in the United States and the need to provide society a more efficiently trained work force, the state of Georgia has recently instituted guaranteed postsecondary vocational-technical training. This program assures employers that when hiring a trained graduate from one of the 32 technical institutions in the state, they are guaranteed that the training received by that future employee was of the highest caliber. The warranty program is tied to implementation of statewide curriculum standards. To determine how teachers feel about the warranty, a questionnaire was distributed to 75 postsecondary technical institute instructors in southwest Georgia. The questionnaire asked the teachers' opinions on how the warranty program would affect long-range goals and the evaluation process and the expected effectiveness of the warranty by instructors who were or were not yet teaching under the new curriculum standards. Sixty (80 percent) of the questionnaires were completed. Analysis of the questionnaires showed a positive reaction to the warranty program. A majority of the instructors expected that during the next 2 years, because of the warranty program, enrollment will increase, dropouts will decrease, paperwork will increase, and student knowledge retention, motivation, and self-esteem will increase. They also expect that relations with business and local communities will improve. (28 references) (KC)

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A CASE FOR: GUARANTEED
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A Case For: Guaranteed Employment Training

It is imperative that teachers and instructors maintain a vigilance as related to future advancements of society. When we try to understand the future we can assume that we are better prepared to teach, change and accept change. Therefore, we are more capable of maintaining an instructional curriculum that prepares learners for the world of tomorrow as well as today.

Naisbett and Aburdene (1990) introduced their recently published book, *Megatrends 2000*, with a shocking statement about the 1990's and beyond. They say:

Before us is the most important decade in the history of civilization, a period of stunning technological innovations, unprecedented economic opportunity, surprising political reform, and great cultural rebirth.

In other words society will change at a pace that will be difficult to understand as well as maintain an educational and properly trained workforce. And yet new workers are expected, and rightfully so, to arrive at the workplace with the skills and working knowledge expected by industry and business.

President Bush's (1990) Education Summit with State Governors emphasized national literacy by providing a declaration of National Education goals. The goals emphasize the governments views as related to the literacy position for United States citizenry for the year 2000. These goals have specific implications related to the workplace and the training for same. The goals implicate that our educational system must change so that all individuals will be literate and workplace employable.

Dramatic changes will take place in the future workplace (world of work). Work, employment and employability are major cornerstones of our society. We as a society will observe and experience many changes in these cornerstones. Specific changes will occur in the following areas:

1. the place called work.
2. the environment of which work will take place.
3. the length of time spent at work.
4. the process of earning a living (wage) through work.
5. the population(s) that will make up the employment roles.
6. the requirements for advancement within the world of work.
7. the requirements for entry into a career and then employment.
8. the number of employment (job) changes and methods of change one will experience throughout his/her work life.
9. the role of education in relation to the world of work.
10. the methods of training for employment.
11. the types of skills needed for careers and employment.
12. the counseling procedures for selection of a career and employment.
13. the guarantee of training for initial employment, upgrading and retraining by educational institutions.

Vocational-Technical schools and community colleges provide the bulk of customized training for business and industries throughout the United States. Therefore, the major changes and improvements, for employment training, will take place within the instructional curriculums of these institutions.

Carnevale and associations (1990) emphasize this point. Of all the educational institutions the community college and vocational-technical schools have taken a most aggressive movement to responding to the needs of business, industry, and community needs.

Johnson and associates (1987) point out another concept in relation to workforce training. Their report "Workforce 2000" implies that workforce training must be more regimented and more effective. They say:

There is no excuse for vocational programs that "warehouse" students who perform poorly in subjects or for diplomas that register nothing more than years of school attendance. From an economic standpoint, higher standards in the schools are the equivalent of competitiveness internationally.

The state of Georgia has recently made many effective changes in response to these types of criticism and the need to provide society a more efficiently trained workforce. One such response is that of guaranteed postsecondary vocational-technical training.

The state of Georgia, through the Department of Technical and Adult Education, under the leadership of Commissioner Dr. Kenneth H. Breeden, has initiated one such guaranteed warranty educational training program. This program guarantees employers that when hiring a trained graduate from one of the 32 statewide technical institutions, they are guaranteed that the training received by that future employee was of the highest of caliber.

The intent of this warranty program is to create an ongoing quality control assurance system. Also, to ensure that individuals entering Georgia's workforce, upon satisfactorily completing a postsecondary technical institute training program, will be competent, knowledgeable and skilled.

The State Board, with Dr. Breeden's leadership, has demonstrated a commitment to workforce training education. They have extensively improved articulation between the technical institutes and the businesses and industrial communities. Through competencies, defined by the business and industrial communities, the state board has developed new statewide curriculum standards. These standards will be adhered to, by instructors, within all technical institutes throughout the state. The guaranteed warranty program is directly connected to the new state curriculum standards. Therefore, providing a continued evaluation of the standards once the graduate is in the workforce.

This statewide curriculum standards program in conjunction with the guaranteed warranty program has a justifiable purpose and is expected to become a powerful instrument in the revitalization of Georgia's workforce. The warranty program is believed to be the only such program of its kind, and therefore expected to serve as a pioneer program throughout America's educational workforce training community.

It is expected that by 1992, all of Georgia's statewide postsecondary technical institutes training programs, will be under the new curriculum standards and guaranteed warranty program. Compliance to this program will be implemented through the following State Board statement:

If one of our graduates who was educated under a standard program, and his/her employer agree that the employee is deficient of one or more competencies as defined in the standards, the technical institutes will retrain that employee at no instructional cost to employee or employer.

In a world of constant and rapid technological change, Dr. Breeden's concept of guaranteed education is one that the Atlanta newspapers have labeled as "a stroke of brilliance" and "an ingenious idea".

Two aspects that will undoubtedly affect the notability of the guaranteed warranty program is the statewide standardized curriculum, which were defined by business and industry, and the instruction of those programs. The postsecondary technical institutes instructional staffs are the core base for the success of the curriculum standards and guaranteed warranty program. Their instruction is most directly affected by this new concept, and it is up to the individual instructors to provide instructional methods to achieve optimum results which will lead to a guaranteed trained graduate.

A study was conducted for the purpose of assessing the opinions of instructors as to how they felt about how the guaranteed warranty program would affect instruction. A questionnaire was distributed to 75 postsecondary technical institute instructors within Georgia's southwest sector.

The questionnaire requested the instructor's opinion as to how they perceived various factors within the context of four specific areas. These specific areas were:

1. the guarantee warranty programs affect on long-range goals;
2. the guarantee warranty programs affect on the evaluation process;
3. the expected overall effectiveness of the guarantee warranty programs by instructors who were not yet teaching under the new curriculum standards, but would soon begin;
4. the expected overall effectiveness of the guarantee warranty program by instructors who were teaching under the new curriculum standards.

Item number three had only three respondents so that not enough significant information was provided to warrant reporting results. Therefore, all references to item number three will be excluded from the remainder of this paper.

The questionnaire provided instructors an opportunity to respond to each statement independently. Their opinion was sought as related to each statement within one of three categories.

These categories were:

1. less effective
2. no change in effectiveness
3. more effective

The instructors responded to the statements as related to the inclusion of the guarantee warranty program's influence in affecting the ongoing instructional process. Also, the respondent had the option of responding in the form of a negative 10, 20, 30 and 40 percent (less effective) or a positive 10, 20, 30 or 40 percent (more effective).

The respondent was asked to respond to the following:

1. Long Range Goals
 - A. Community Relations
 - B. Industry/Business support
 - C. Economic growth of service area
 - D. Program enrollment

- E. Program drop out rate (students decision)
- F. Program Termination rate (academic failure)
- G. Graduate's skill ability with respect to pre-guarantee warranty program graduates
- H. Graduate's knowledge base with respect to pre-guarantee warranty program evaluations.

2. Evaluation Process

- A. Use of unannounced, non-graded quizzes for the purpose of assessing immediate knowledge retention
- B. Use of unannounced graded tests for the purpose of assessing immediate knowledge retention
- C. Use of announced non-graded quizzes
- D. Use of announced graded tests
- E. Use of four of five plausible multiple-choice answer-type tests
- F. Use of "fill-in-the-blank" tests
- G. Use of essay tests
- H. Use of skill (performance) ungraded tests
- I. Use of skill (performance) graded tests

4. The following section is for instructors who are presently instructing under the new state curriculum standards and therefore immediately affected by the "Guaranteed Training" program.

Question:

How much do you anticipate your programs overall effectiveness will change within the next couple of years under the state curriculum standards and guaranteed warranty program?

- A. Program enrollment
- B. Program drop out rate
- C. Paperwork with regards to accountability of student progress
- D. Student's knowledge retention
- E. Student's skill-ability
- F. Student's self-motivation
- G. Student's self-esteem

The respondent was provided the opportunity to comment, through written expression, on topics of curriculum, evaluation processes, instructional processes and in general.

The questionnaire was distributed to 75 postsecondary instructors. Sixty (80%) of the questionnaires were returned fully completed for the purpose of this paper. The results were analyzed in regards to three considerations as related to the population. They were:

1. Total population (N = 60)
2. That portion of the total population with less than a four year college degree (N = 20)
3. That portion of the total population with at least a four-year college degree (N = 40)

Within the total population there was almost an equal distribution of instructors with more than six years of instructional experience and instructors with less than six years of instructional experience.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

For the purpose of this paper we will analyze the data relating to the three areas (long-range goals, evaluation process and overall evaluation). Within each of the three areas we include a graphic figure depicting the statistics mean as related to the opinions of the instructors for each statement. The means are implicated in Figure 1, 2, & 3 in relation to the following three populations.

1. Total population (N = 60)
2. Those instructors who have obtained a four year college degree (N = 40)
3. Those instructors who have not obtained a four year college degree (N = 20)

As shown in Figure 1, related to long rang planning, the respondents opinions indicate a definite positive trend toward the success and future effectiveness of the guaranteed warranty program.

Only one statement, program termination rate (academic failure), received a negative mean response. That response was provided by the group within the population who had not obtained a four year college degree.

The range of responses by the total population was between a mean positive of 3.1 percent and a mean positive of 21.5 percent.

FIGURE 1 Long-Range Goals

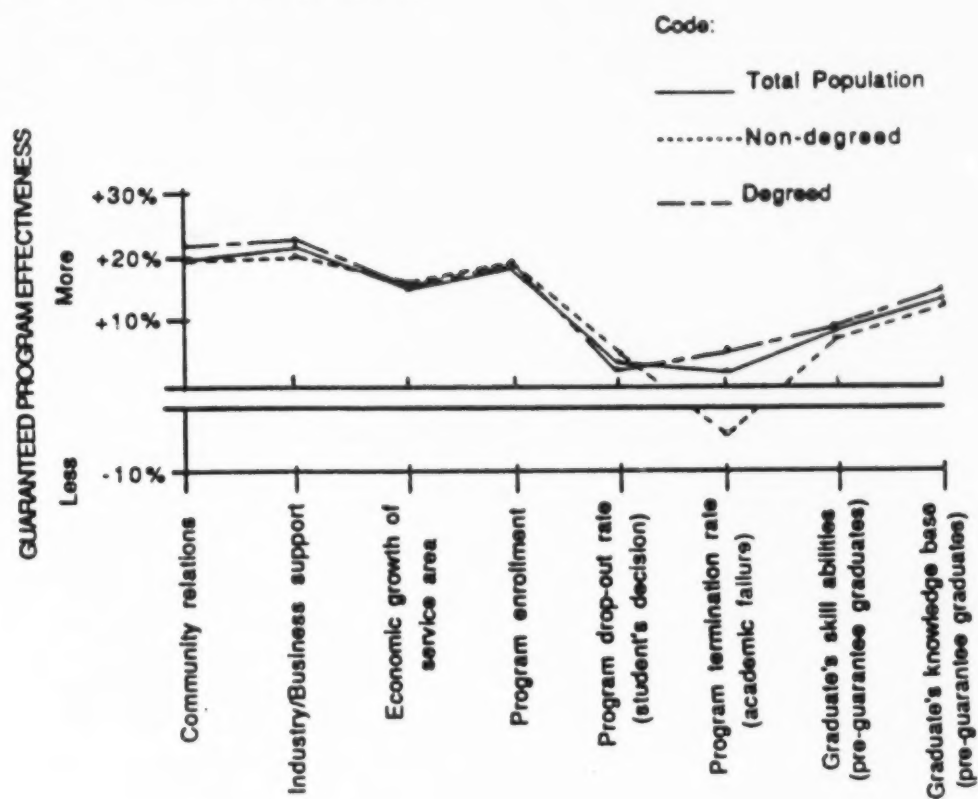
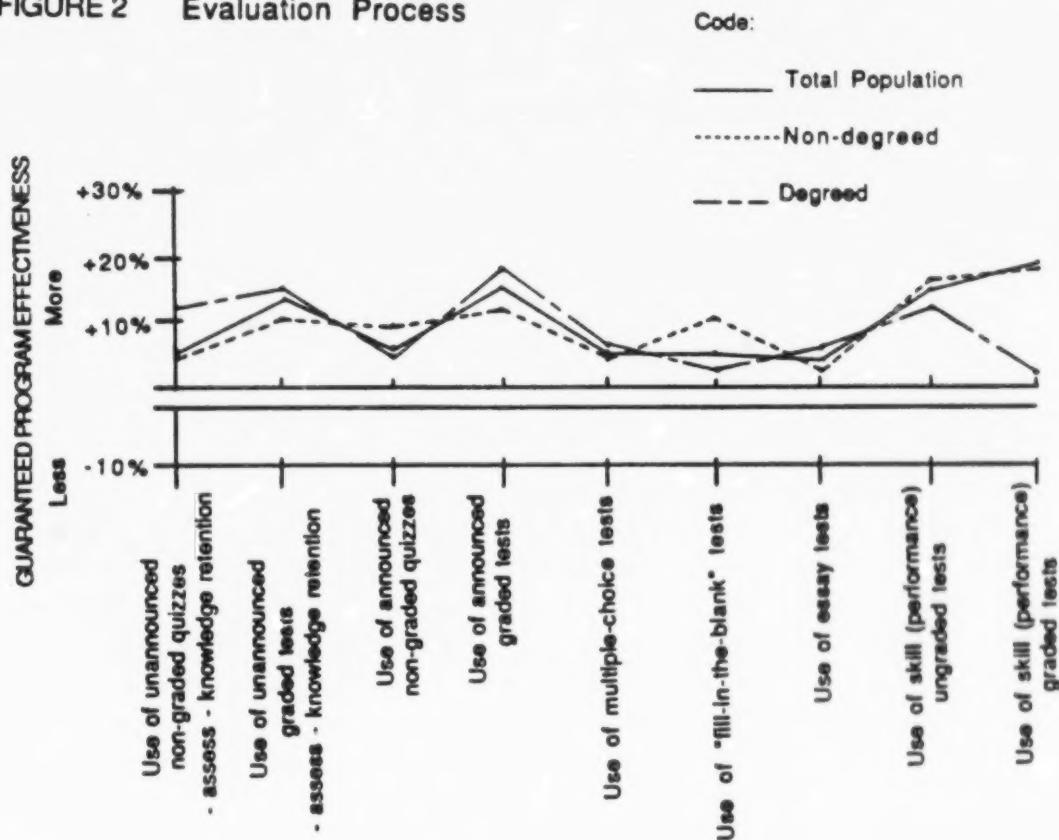


Figure 2 also indicates a positive reaction by the instructors as related to the effect the guaranteed warranty program will have upon various evaluation processes. The range of responses by the total population was between a mean positive of 4.1 percent and a mean positive of 19.6%.

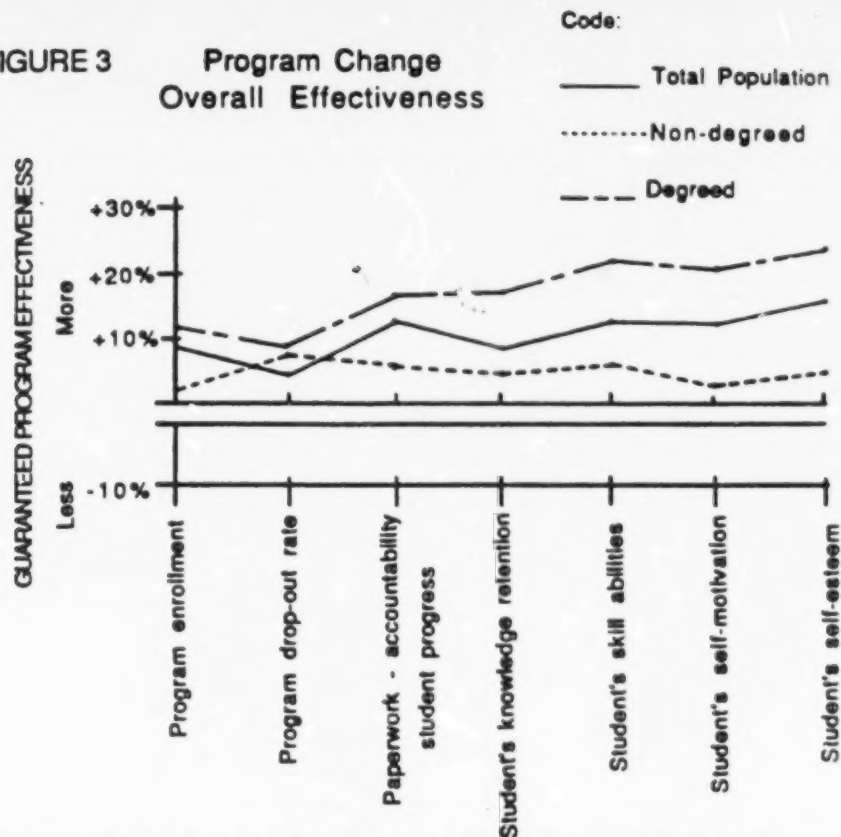
FIGURE 2 Evaluation Process



The most impressive data are related to Figure 3. All mean opinion responses by those instructors already under the new state curriculum standards and guaranteed warranty program were positive. In other words the inclusion of the state guaranteed warranty program will improve the instructional process within the statewide technical institutes.

There is a significant difference in opinion of the two separate groups (non-degreed and degreed) as to the amount of effectiveness the guaranteed warranty program will have upon the total training program. The range of responses by the total population was between a mean positive of 4.6 percent and a mean positive of 14.5 percent.

FIGURE 3 Program Change
Overall Effectiveness



There were four comment areas open for written responses from participants. Upon review, it appears that the majority of the comments were positive and constructive. Nineteen of the 60 (32%) respondents made comments. The following is a list of comments as stated.

COMMENT PERTAINING TO CURRICULUM:

Positive:

1. The curriculum is well planned, not perfect, but well planned. (Math)
2. The new curriculum is good. The problems are (1) no money for equipment (2) not enough time to do it all. (Automotive Collision)
3. Too much in mechanical needs more money to fund what we are being required to teach. Some of equipment in standards is not in any schools. (Automotive Collision)
4. Math course, such as Math 103, contain too much material to cover in a five hour class. There is an overlap in material to be covered in Math 103 and 104. Students weak in arithmetic basics should be required to take Math 101 prior to 103; delete arithmetic from 103.
5. Not enough time allotted to teach all performance task in curriculum. EX: ACR 104 mechanical and electrical systems. (Auto Collision)

6. Not enough time to cover material related to actual electronics.
7. Too much to cover for given time frame. (Electronics)
8. With new state curriculum, I now spend half as much time in some important subjects. The area employers express more emphasis on certain of these subjects. (Drafting)
9. Too little "hands on". Too much college oriented. Very hard for slow learner to keep up. Some of our best technicians now in the field were "slow learners". (Electronics)
10. Some courses do not have sufficient time allotted. Some competencies need to be reassessed as to which course they should be taught in. (Electronics)

Negative:

1. We had it right before standards . . . "If its not broken, don't fix it." (Business Education)
2. The new state curriculum is absurd. (Information and Office Technology)
3. Curriculum should be geared to meet the needs of vocational students - not college level students. (Math)

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO EVALUATION PROCESSES:

Positive:

1. Good. (Automotive Collision)
2. Evaluations have to be much harder to be sure the student is learning. (Automotive Collision)
3. More unannounced testing and "fill in the blank" testing is being done now to insure student is learning. (Electronics)
4. I don't have time to give unannounced tests now in some areas or subjects. (Drafting)
5. Evaluations will be carried on as usual. (Math)
6. Needs more hands on lab instead of class work. (Electronics)
7. Evaluations should be conducted by individual instructors on subject matter taught in a classroom setting. (Math)

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESSES:

Positive:

1. Classes with different courses are combined because of scheduling problems. This makes instructing difficult. (Math)
2. More classroom and theory required. (Automotive Collision)
3. No changes. (Math)
4. Needs to be more flexible and individualized for slow learner. (Electronics)
5. Instructors should be responsible for setting the instructional mode - be it individualized or class setting. (Math)

Negative:

1. No time to prepare for classes. (Business Education)
2. The instructor needs more control. (Automotive Collision)

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Positive; constructive suggestions for improvements; and neutral comments:

1. Will work out good in future, 3 - 5 years after all changes are implemented. (Automotive Collision)
2. One it's all ironed out, it ought to be a good system. .keeps students' knowledge base high and puts a slight "competitive edge" into instruction. .keeps instructors more up-to-date on industry needs. (Electronics)
3. Students seem to realized that they are going to have to be more serious about their work in order to pass. (English/Dev. Studies)
4. I feel that 70% for passing grade is not an adequate scale to prepare students to ge guaranteed i this program. (Information and Office Tech)
5. I think these questions apply more accurately to skills areas rather than academics. (English/Dev. Studies)
6. More related math, English instructors are needed in these schools since all programs are required to take them and enrollment is improving as is the number of different programs offered. (Math)

Negative:

1. The guaranteed training will have no affect on training. The students who slip through the cracks will not return for retraining nor will not benefit any more from returning. (Information and Office Technology)
2. Too much paperwork and emphasis on numbers and surveys. (Business Education)
3. Curriculum evaluations and instructional processes have always been as good as could as I could make them at the time. I intend to continue this regardless of any guarantees. (Math)
4. Guaranteed training is nothing more than public relations (PR) selling point as an attempt to improve enrollment. If we could still train the students as before under the "old" standards and use individualized instructions, "guaranteed training" would not be needed! (Electronics)
5. If we could attract a better level of student with the education and desire to succeed, then this will work. I doubt we ever will. (Automotive Collision)
6. Too much paperwork. (Business Education)

SUMMARY

A summary of the finding:

1. A majority of the instructors expect the following changes to occur the next two years because of the guarantee warranty training program.
 - A. Program enrollment will increase
 - B. Program drop-out rate will decrease
 - C. The amount of paperwork in regards to accountability of student progress will increase
 - D. Student knowledge retention will increase
 - E. Student's self-motivation will increase
 - F. Student's self-esteem will increase
2. In relation to "long-range planning" the instructors expect the following to occur because of the guarantee warranty training program.
 - A. Positive relations with local communities will increase
 - B. More support from local business and industry will occur
 - C. Positive effects will occur in relation to economic growth of local service area

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